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Signs that Give a Premonition of the Future in Jewish Tragedies in Europe and Soviet Union in the 20th Century

Znaki przepowiadające przyszłość w europejskich i radzieckich tragediach żydowskich ubiegłego stulecia

Streszczenie: Istnieją dwa rodzaje dyskursu publicznego na temat konkretnych wydarzeń. Pierwszy z nich ma charakter oficjalny i dotyczy mediów publicznych. Przekazują go autorytety i renomowane instytucje. Drugi natomiast jest nieoficjalny i odnosi się do sfery prywatnej (plotki, podpowiedzi, porady w grupie bliskich sobie ludzi). Choć te dwie odmiany dyskursu publicznego funkcjonują jednocześnie, to dominuje odmiana oficjalna. Niemniej po pewnym czasie odmiana nieformalna zaczyna wypierać oficjalną. Znaki przepowiadające przyszłość najczęściej spotyka się w nieoficjalnym dyskursie.

Słowa kluczowe: Holokaust, stalinizm, tragedie żydowskie, dyskurs publiczny, przyszłość

Знаки предсказывающие будущее в европейских и советских еврейских трагедиях прошлого века

Резюме: Есть два типа публичного дискурса о конкретных событиях. Первый из них официальный и касается государственных СМИ. Его передают авторитеты и известные учреждения. Второй — неофициальный и относится к частной сфере (сплетни, намеки, советы в группе близких друг другу людей). Хотя этих два типа публичного дискурса действуют одновременно, доминирует официальный. Тем не менее, через некоторое время неофициальный тип начинает заменять официальный. Знаки, предсказывающие будущее, чаще всего встречаются в неофициальном дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: холокост, сталинизм, еврейские трагедии, публичный дискурс, будущее.

די לחכימא ברמיזא (מדרש משלי כ"ב ה)

A hint for the wise is enough
(Exegesis of Proverbs, chap. 22, ver. 8)

Introduction

In this article, I suggest a new approach to historical research based on greater sensitivity to informal historical testimonies. This new approach can be helpful in foreseeing future developments for

researchers as well as for general public. In cases where most of the modern testimonies have told one story and only very few have told another, historians have generally preferred to relate to the story told by most of the testimonies and have usually ignored those that differed. Such an approach can lead to future tragedies, such as those, which befell the Jewish people in the twentieth century in Europe and the Soviet Union. I propose relating specifically to the testimonies that differ from those that give an accepted version of events. Very often, the differing versions give the true story that the authorities try to conceal for various reasons. It is eventually seen that it is precisely the different version that tells the truth.

This approach may be called “hinted signs that give a premonition of the future” and it can be probably described as part of oral history research. These are small hints, opinions, and gossip dropped incidentally concerning dramatic, tragic historical events of tremendous future importance. They are hidden signs, which portend future happenings. These hints may be written in a casual note or dropped by chance by isolated and seemingly unimportant individuals. Such hinted predictions refer to historical events of tremendous importance, which the totalitarian authorities try to conceal.

There are certain cases both in sociology and in historiography, of which I will now give some examples, which bear a resemblance to “hinted signs that give a premonition of the future”. In the introduction to the monumental collection of articles *Informality in Eastern Europe: Structures, Political Cultures and Social Practices*, edited by Christian Giordano and Nicolas Hayoz (2013), the editors speak of a non-formal discourse: informal political and social networks that exist chiefly in Eastern Europe. These networks are so influential that they become a significant part of the formal network¹.

Jonathan Wheatley in his article “Informal and Formal Institutions in the Former Soviet Union”² says that these non-formal political and social networks are especially to be found in Eastern Europe and in the Muslim republics in the eastern Soviet Union. Those active in these networks are generally involved in various kinds of illegal activities: criminal activities for economic gain or criminal activities to gain power and political influence. These non-formal networks even succeeded in influencing the Soviet leadership,

¹ Ch. Giordano, N. Hayoz (eds.), *Informality in Eastern Europe: Structures, Political Cultures and Social Practices*, Peter Lang AG, Bern 2013, pp. 11 ff.

² J. Wheatley, *Informal and Formal Institutions in the Former Soviet Union*, in: Ch. Giordano, N. Hayoz (eds.), *Informality in Eastern Europe...*, pp. 319–336.

and after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the leadership of the government of the Russian Federation.

Elena Denisova-Schmidt in her article *How Unwritten Rules Can Influence Human Resource Management in Russia*³ speaks of the great influence of informal practices in Russia. She mentions, for example, unwritten rules which are more important than the formal laws: rules of friendship and mutual responsibility in closed circles such as giving assistance only to friends that belong to these circles. Because of the influence of these informal practices, foreign firms do not invest in Russia much for fear of becoming involved in illegal manifestations.

Shandana Khan Mohmand, in her article *Informal Local Governance Institutions: What They Do and Why They Matter*, calls for an acknowledgement of the important role and great influence of informal social networks in local government. According to her, the influence of these networks is no less, and perhaps even greater, than that of the official laws, and it is advisable to take these unofficial networks into consideration if one wishes to conduct affairs in an acceptable way⁴.

Nico Besnier, in his book *Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics*⁵, deals with subjects, which are closer to the subject of my article. According to him, talk in general and private conversations in particular, influence politics, the assessment of the social importance of individuals and societies, and the creation and destruction of the reputations of people and societies. At the same time, the writer does not relate to the influence and importance of conversations outside the spheres of politics and power-play in society.

Joseph Epstein, in his book *Gossip: The Untrivial Pursuit*⁶ relates to gossip in the traditional sense of the word. A malicious conversation between people exchanging information is generally unacceptable. His approach is greatly influenced by his Jewish education according to which gossip is strictly forbidden. He gives examples from many areas: from Russian and French literature, from American army reports, and from social life in Britain. His research is unfocussed, and perhaps for that reason his scholarship is not on a high level.

³ E. Denisova-Schmidt, *How Unwritten Rules Can Influence Human Resource Management in Russia*, in: Ch. Giordano, N. Hayoz (eds.), *Informality in Eastern Europe...*, pp. 379–396.

⁴ S. Khan Mohamand, *Informal Local Governance Institutions: What They Do and Why They Matter*, Institute of Development Studies — Working Paper, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, vol. 2016 (468), May 2016, pp. 3–23.

⁵ N. Besnier, *Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu 2009.

⁶ J. Epstein, *Gossip: The Untrivial Pursuit*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston—New York 2011.

Kathryn Waddington, in her book *Gossip and Organizations*⁷ speaks of gossip in the spheres of administration and social organization. She treats gossip as superfluous talk among the members of various organizations, which can influence the proper functioning of these organizations. She suggests a number of ways of neutralising the harmful effects of gossip in workplaces.

Many studies have been written on non-formal networks seen as corrupt, on gossip as a superficial and harmful phenomenon and on many kinds of superfluous talk, but not a single study has been made of the phenomenon of "hinted history", which I deal with in this article⁸.

Two Types of Public Discourse in Totalitarian Regimes

There are two types of public discourse regarding events in totalitarian regimes. One is the official type, which is broadcast on the radio, and found in the public media and in educational institutions. As against this, there is another type, which is unofficial and is mainly transmitted privately, from one person to another.

The first type, the official one, is regarded as the normative form of public discourse. It is dictated from above by the recognized authorities and institutions. On the other hand, the unofficial type, which can be called "hinted signs that give a premonition of the future", consists of an assemblage of personal opinions, rumors, hints, and gossip existing among intimate groups of people who are close to each other⁹. The authorities claim these opinions, rumors, gossip, and hints present events in false, distorted light. The first type, the official one, is regarded by the authorities as positive, exemplary, in good taste, while the second, the unofficial one, is presented by the authorities as negative, unacceptable and worthy of condemnation. The authorities would even deny that the unofficial discourse exists.

These two types of public discourse, the official and the unofficial, exist simultaneously in totalitarian regimes, the official one openly and in a dominant manner, and the unofficial one

⁷ K. Waddington, *Gossip and Organizations*, Routledge, London 2012.

⁸ See: the groundbreaking work: Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*.

⁹ See: A. Tugend, *Studies Find that Gossip Isn't Just Loose Talk*. "The New York Times" 2012, June 15, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/16/your-money/studies-find-gossip-isnt-just-loose-talk.html> [5.11.2021]; M. Feinberg, R. Willer, J. Stellar, D. Keltner, *The Virtue of Gossip: Reputational Information Sharing as Prosocial Behavior*, "The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology" 2012, May 102 (5).

surreptitiously, to such a degree that people hide its existence and in public deny any part in it. In the course of time, however, the informal type supplants the official type. After a long period of time, very gradually, the official type of discourse begins to weaken, and at the same time, the unofficial type of discourse begins to strengthen and becomes increasingly open and public, increasingly acceptable. Finally, the unofficial type of discourse overcomes the public, official type, obliterates the latter and becomes the new public discourse. People begin to relate solely to this new public discourse that was previously unofficial and forget the existence of the former official public discourse.

In the course of history we see many examples of this development. When the authorities in the Soviet Union were praising the communist regime and ideology, there were rumors and perceptions among the public of government lies, hypocrisy, cruelty and the unjust essence of the persecutions by the regime. In the course of time, the government of the Soviet Union weakened, and the public discourse critical of the government became open, accepted and dominant, until the Soviet Union finally broke up.

Hinted Signs that Give a Premonition of the Future in the Holocaust

Hinted public discourse can consist of messages, which can be statements, writings or short episodes, which foreshadow dramatic events of historical importance. They can be the incidental remarks of ordinary people, gossip, or short inscriptions, which appear in unexpected places. These statements, inscriptions and episodes provide partial and incomplete information of great significance. Their meaning contradicts the ideas accepted in society, which is the official history.

Some remarkable examples of hinted signs that give a premonition of the future can be found in times of dramatic and tragic historical events. For instance, Martin Gilbert, in his celebrated book *The Holocaust*, described the following historical event. In one of the railway stations in Poland, where the Nazis put the Jews on trains, which took them to concentration and extermination camps, a short inscription in Polish was written on a wall, saying, "Jews, you are being taken to your death!" Brief inscriptions of this kind appeared in many railway stations¹⁰. Inscription of this

¹⁰ M. Gilbert, *The Holocaust. The Jewish Tragedy*, Fontana Press, London 1987, p. 328.

kind were remembered by people, who went on trains in these stations and survived the Holocaust. However, these people admit that when they first saw such an inscription, it was hard for them to believe it. They were barely able to do anything and did not do anything as a result of seeing this message. Inscriptions of this kind belong to the category of hinted signs that give a premonition of the future because they revealed the bitter truth concealed by the Nazi authorities, who said that the Jews were being taken to the east for work. Such inscriptions contradicted the German propaganda, which promised the Jews tolerable conditions providing they worked. The existence of these inscriptions was possible due to the fact that they were written in the Polish language, which the German authorities did not understand.

The category of hinted signs that give a premonition of the future also includes short episodes, which likewise illustrate bitter truths and contradict the official propaganda of the authorities. For example, Dwork and Van Pelt, in their book *Holocaust: A History*, related that when trains filled with Jews passed along the railway lines leading to the extermination camp Treblinka, Polish women stood by the tracks and made signs signifying death. They drew their middle finger across their throat¹¹, but the Jews in the railway carriages found it difficult to believe them. Their mental and emotional self-defense mechanism did not allow them to internalize the bitter message, and consequently only a few of them tried to break through the walls and doors of the carriages.

On the other hand, internalization of political rumors, paying attention to them, and acting in accordance with them: protected those who listened from trouble and in many cases saved their lives. For example, Martin Gilbert, in his book *Holocaust*, related the evidence of Hugo Gryn, a fourteen-year-old Jewish youth from Hungary, who on May 15, 1944 was brought on a train with the members of his family to the Auschwitz extermination camp. When they arrived, they were driven from the train by armed SS soldiers with dogs. There were also Jewish prisoners from the camp dressed in striped pajamas who unloaded the luggage of the Jewish newcomers. One of them literally saved Hugo Gryn's life by dropping him a hint:

We were exhausted, thoroughly demoralized and frightened and the trains stood for some time. We could only hear the shunting of engines, crunch of people walking outside, and eventually, well into daylight, the door pulled

¹¹ D. Dwork, J. van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History*, John Murray Press, Stroud 2021, p. 359.

open and people being now herded out, and an amazing scene. It reminded me of what I imagined a lunatic asylum would be like, because in addition to the SS who were moving up and down and pushing people around towards the head of the platform, the other people there wore this striped uniform, with a very curious shaped hat, and they were just moving up and down taking so-called luggage of the train. One of them I would say saved my life, because he went around muttering in Yiddish, 'You're eighteen, you have a trade', which I took to be the muttering of a lunatic because it was such a curious thing to say — that's all he kept saying to people — particularly to young people. My father was there and took it seriously, and by the time we in fact came to the head of this platform where the selection was taking place I had already been rehearsed, so that when the SS man says: 'How old are you?' I said I was nineteen; and 'Do you have a trade?' Yes, I'm a carpenter and a joiner. My brother who was there was younger, he couldn't say he was nineteen, and so he was sent with the old people the wrong way and my mother went after him. [...] Well that of course was in fact the last time I saw my brother...¹²

In this example we can see that complying with the message concealed in a hint can literally save one's life, while ignoring and rejecting a hint can lead to the loss of one's life¹³.

People are apt to reject the painful messages of hinted predictions of future because their content is terrible for them and fills them with apprehension. People put a mechanism of denial into operation out of emotional and psychological self-protection.

The hints contained in political gossip are stored in the memories of those who encounter it, but they generally do not do anything with this information, ignore it and do not change their behavior, and thus they reduce the chances of helping themselves or even saving themselves from death. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the information provided by these hints is generally an unpleasant surprise, illogical and unreasonable, essentially cruel, hard to understand, unconvincing. It is hard to believe this information both because of its irrationality and because of the cruelty of its nature.

Secondly, people who come across this information refuse to believe it because they do not wish to think that it represents the true state of affairs. People who come across the information contained in these hints experience a state of shock, a feeling of impotence, confusion and inability to act. Failure to take the steps required by this information or a delay in taking these steps worsens the situation and finally results in an impasse for

¹² M. Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe During the Second World War*, Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., Markham, p. 677.

¹³ Here, Martin Gilbert gives an example of how Jewish newcomers to an extermination camp failed to understand and internalize the message concealed in a hint, and thus took no action and were eventually killed: *ibidem*, p. 498.

the people affected by the knowledge contained in the hinted predictions of future.

Hinted Signs that gave a Premonition of the Future for the Jews in the Soviet Union

It was hard for Soviet citizens to believe that devoted party members were brutally persecuted and harshly punished for no reason whatsoever during the period of Stalinist terror. It was especially hard to admit that the Stalinist authorities dealt particularly cruelly with the Jews due to their anti-Semitism. Messages relayed by the hinted signs channel that these prosecutions and punishments were unjust and undeserved seemed unreasonable and absurd, and people tended to disbelieve them. It was hard for Soviet citizens to internalize the fact that the totalitarian Soviet regime would create a vast apparatus of interrogation and punishment of innocent individuals and devote precious financial and human resources for this pointless and harmful purpose, especially when these resources were so desperately needed in the miserable and impoverished Soviet reality. Revelations of discriminations against Jews in a communist country, which promoted equality and brotherhood between nations, seemed inconceivable.

As a result, many people who knew they were about to be arrested by the authorities did not leave their homes and did not escape to the Asiatic republics¹⁴ in the eastern Soviet Union. They could not believe in the absurdity of the regime's policies but preferred to think that the regime behaved in a proper, just, correct and effective manner. They assumed that since they were true communists, devoted to their Soviet motherland in heart and soul, they would finally not be arrested, and if they were, they would soon be released when the authorities had seen that they were innocent of any offence against the communist motherland.

Jews did not want to see the clear evidence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and preferred to believe their own wrong beliefs and misinterpretations of the reality. Consequently, many of those marked for arrest did not do anything to save themselves, and were finally arrested, were taken to be killed, languished in Siberian labor camps or suffered long years of imprisonment which damaged their health and that of their families¹⁵.

¹⁴ Е. Гинцбург, *Крутой маршрут: Хроника времен культа личности*, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano 1967, в 2 томах, pp. 29–33, (Within the Whirlwind — English edition).

¹⁵ See: S. Rosefield, *Red Holocaust*, Routledge Publishing House, London 2009.

In the Nazi period, likewise, it was difficult for the Jews to believe that the Germans, who were known to be positive, rational people, would engage in a huge enterprise whose sole aim was to produce infinite death. Death has no positive, constructive value, and thus the hints conveyed through the hinted history channel that the Nazis were putting all their efforts into a vast enterprise of death seemed absurd, crazy, totally unreasonable. The Jews found it hard to imagine that the Nazis wished to exterminate them, with a tremendous waste of resources, in the course of a difficult war rather than to harness their capacities in the economic, scientific and technological spheres. If Hitler, instead of exterminating the Jews, had set them to work, even as forced labor, in the fields of economics, science and technology, not only would he significantly increase his chances to win the war but he would not even have had to wage it as the situation of Germany would have improved in these spheres and Germany would have become one of the greatest economic and political powers. However, Hitler chose an irrational, destructive, unreasonable path.

The cruel nature of the messages conveyed by the hinted signs that declared that the Jews were not being taken to the east to work but to be killed prevented the Jews from internalizing them. The sheer horror of these messages caused the great majority of the Jews to activate their emotional, mental and psychological self-defense mechanisms — mechanisms of denial — and thus they diminished their chances of saving their lives. Those amongst them who did not protect themselves psychologically but internalized the terrible messages increased the chances of saving themselves.

A short episode of great significance, which also comes under the heading of hinted signs giving a premonition of the future is described in a book by Yakov Yakovlevitch Etinger, a Soviet Jewish writer and journalist¹⁶. Yakov Yakovlevitch Etinger's name at birth was Yakov Lazarevich Siterman.

In his memoirs, he related the following event¹⁷. When he was a child, at the beginning of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Yakov was confined with his biological parents — his father, Lazar Siterman, who was a prominent doctor, and his mother — in the ghetto in Minsk in White Russia. On his father's request, his nurse Marina Kharetskaya, of Russian descent, who also served in their home as a household help, took the child out of the ghetto,

¹⁶ Yakov Yakovlevich Etinger (1929, Minsk 2014, Moscow) was a Soviet and later Russian history researcher, journalist, professor of African studies.

¹⁷ Я. Этингер, *Это невозможно забыть: Воспоминания*, Весь мир, Москва 2001, pp. 42–43.

representing him as her son. Yakov's parents were killed by the Nazis, and before they parted, Lazar Siterman gave his son the address of a colleague and close friend, Yakov Etinger, of Jewish descent, a doctor who lived and worked in Moscow.

After the end of the war, the young Yakov Siterman and his nurse went together to the home of the doctor Yakov Etinger in Moscow. The doctor and his wife adopted young Yakov as their son and took him into their home together with the nurse, who had saved his life. Yakov Siterman adopted the paternal and family name of his adoptive father and became Yakov Yakovlevitch Etinger.

Before the occurrence of the "doctors' plot"¹⁸, young Yakov's adoptive father was one of the most eminent physicians in the Soviet Union. In accordance with his political views, he strongly criticized the totalitarian Stalinist regime to his friends and colleagues, who came to visit him at home, and also in his conversations with them on the telephone.

One day, the telephone in their apartment stopped working and was disconnected. Yakov Etinger the doctor called the telephone repair service to his home. Two telephone technicians came to the house and worked on the telephone, and their work took a long time. The nurse wondered why it took so long for them to repair the telephone and examined what they had done. When the technicians had finished their work and left, the nurse told the doctor and his wife, the owners of the house, that the technicians had inserted something strange in the receiver of the telephone. She had a suspicion that it may have been a device for listening-in to their conversations, but the doctor in his credulousness totally rejected her suspicions. He did not take seriously the hints, with which history provided him.

Later, when the "doctors' plot" was at its height, Yakov Etinger the doctor was arrested. In the investigations that followed, it appeared that the proofs given by the regime of his "anti-Soviet activities" were taken precisely from recordings of his telephone conversations with his colleagues and friends. When the young Yakov Etinger was arrested, he was also presented with recordings of telephone conversations of his adoptive father and himself as a proof of his anti-Soviet activities.

¹⁸ The Doctors' plot was an anti-Semitic campaign in the Soviet Union organized by Josef Stalin. In 1951–1953, a group of predominantly Jewish doctors from Moscow were accused of a conspiracy to assassinate Soviet leaders. This was later accompanied by publications of anti-Semitic character in the media, which condemned people with Jewish names. Many Jewish doctors were arrested, some were executed. A few weeks after the death of Stalin, the new Soviet leadership said there was a lack of evidence and the case was dropped.

The nurse was correct, but Yakov Etinger the doctor found it difficult to believe what she had said, for he had never heard of the authorities fixing listening-in devices in the homes of those they suspected. He related to the nurse's suspicions with denial, for he was an upright, moral person, and it was difficult for him to believe that the authorities could set up such a dishonest trap for him and would discriminate him for his Jewish descent. It was difficult for him to imagine that the Soviet authorities were so base and contemptible. He was a naive person, far too honest. As a result, he ignored the nurse's warnings and continued to attack the Soviet regime in conversations with his friends.

The Difficulties in Conveying the Messages of Hinted Signs that Give a Premonition of the Future

There exists a kind of censorship of the hinted signs channel performed by the very society, to which this channel belongs. This situation generally occurs when the punishments imposed on the users of the channel are so severe that people prefer to limit their use of it. For instance, the punishments imposed by the Soviet authorities in the period of the Stalinist terror were so severe that people preferred not to spread rumors, gossip, give hints, pass on personal messages, leave inscriptions, and to eliminate as far as possible any statements that had a meaning opposed to the messages conveyed by the government media. People were frightened to speak openly even in their family for fear of the punishments imposed by the authorities. Another example: some Jews escaped from a concentration camp, came back to a Jewish ghetto and conveyed the news that the Jews were not being sent for resettlement and physical labor in the East but were shipped to an extermination camp and gassed there for no reason whatsoever. However, the inhabitants of a ghetto refused to believe the escapees and almost beat them up, accusing them of frightening the people in the ghetto and unnecessarily spreading panic among them. The messages conveyed through the hinted signs were unbearably harsh and people in the ghettos used a kind of self-censorship rejecting these messages in order to protect themselves psychologically.

The hinted signs channel is the only true way for people to express their opinions when they live in a totalitarian regime. The use of this channel is distasteful because of fear of punishment by the authorities. As Eugeniya Ginzburg has related, the prisoners

in Soviet jails, mainly Jews, communicated with each other by tapping on the walls of their cells¹⁹, but the prisoners themselves limited this practice, so engaging in a form of self-censorship and thus concealing its existence from the prison authorities. Those that used this channel engaged in a form of self-censorship in order to diminish the chances of being caught and punished for using it. Thus, the citizens of the Soviet Union were wary of expressing critical opinions of the Soviet regime and expressed them in an oblique form.

However, even in an open, democratic and liberal society there is a kind of censorship of the messages of the hinted signs channel. This of course is not because of fear of punishment by an anti-Semitic totalitarian regime, which does not apply in this case, but it generally happens because most people want to psychologically protect themselves and choose to believe positive, encouraging, optimistic messages, whereas the messages of the hinted signs channel are gloomy and pessimistic. People find it hard to believe the unpleasant messages of the hinted signs channel. Instead, they prefer to ignore these messages, and they put up their emotional and psychological defenses, which make them pretend that they did not understand the hurtful messages²⁰.

For instance, people prefer not to give credence to gossip and rumors about important public figures who they think are “good”. People like to believe in positive, enlightened, lofty values, often ignoring persistent rumors that their values are flawed, that in their society there are signs of corruption and things are not as positive as they imagined. People prefer to pretend to themselves, in emotional and psychological self-defense, that they do not understand the terrible significance of the warnings they encounter accidentally, suggesting that the foundations of their lives are not as rational, secure and reliable as they wish to believe. This applied particularly to the Jewish population in Europe during the Second World War.

The hinted signs channel generally conveys the truth while the official channel tries to calm the public-at-large, to send it to sleep as it were, usually in a harmful way. One must always take the messages of the unofficial hinted signs channel seriously, especially when they contradict the official line of the totalitarian authorities.

At the same time, there can be unjustifiably optimistic messages in the hinted signs channel. This happens when a situation is

¹⁹ Е. Гинцбург, *Крутой маршрут: Хроника времен культа личности...*, pp. 83–117.

²⁰ See: V. Barnett, *Understanding Stalinism: The “Orwellian Discrepancy” and the “Rational Choice Dictator”*, “Europe-Asia Studies” 2006, no. 58 (3).

unbearable, and in their distress, people hope that their dreams of an end to their suffering will soon come to pass. People long for redemption so much that their minds become clouded and they begin to send each other their dreams of redemption as though it were really about to happen. Such things happened in the ghettos in the Second World War when the suffering Jews believed that the Red Army would soon come and rescue them from the Nazis²¹.

Conclusion: Hinted Signs as the True Source for a Premonition of Future Events

Both ordinary people and historians must pay attention to the hints of various kinds scattered in the course of dramatic historical episodes. This applies particularly to the Jewish people in the light of the persistence of anti-Semitism in world history. The hinted signs, which generally take the form of political gossip, short inscriptions and chance incidents, are not regarded as worthy of credence. The content of these hinted signs is usually painful, repellent and perplexing, and reduces the listener to a state of helplessness and sometimes hopelessness.

These hints reveal a reality different from the view of the situation presented by the official authorities, and they depict it in an unexpected light — somber, fateful, tragic. The content of these hints reveals the truth, which the authorities wish to hide for whatever reasons. These messages prove to be a kind of prophecy, as in the course of time their content is shown to be correct, becomes known to the public and is accepted, while the propaganda of the authorities is shown to be false, misleading, illusory, and conducive to disaster. For instance, the truth about the victims of the Stalinist regime came out in the course of time, and the actions of the Nazis were likewise finally exposed, and the Nazis were seen by the whole world as wicked, a disaster for all peoples and the very embodiment of evil.

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²¹ M. Gilbert, *The Holocaust. The Jewish Tragedy...*, pp. 248–249.

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